

POLICY & PROCEDURE	DATE ISSUED: 02/15/00	SUBJECT: CODE OF ETHICS	PAGE(S) NUMBER 1 of 3
MILWAUKEE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION	DATE REVISED/REVIEWED: 10/25/00, 5/21/02, 11/07/02	POLICY NUMBER:	

MISSION

The Milwaukee County Mental Health Division: For the empowerment and recovery of all with mental health needs in our community.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PATIENTS, CLIENTS, RESIDENTS AND CONSUMERS

We believe in treating the people we serve with respect and dignity. We, therefore have the responsibility to:

- Provide the people we serve with reasonable access to quality care that is appropriate for the patient's condition and needs.
- Treat the people we serve with dignity and respect in all aspects of patient care. This includes involving patients, to the extent possible, in decisions regarding their own treatment.
- Make every reasonable effort to assure that the relief of human suffering and safety of the people we serve will be sustained or enhanced by our services.
- Assure that the spiritual needs and cultural beliefs and practices of the people we serve are respected and appropriately accommodated.
- Protect the confidentiality and privacy of the people we serve.
- Promote principles of recovery for the people we serve throughout the Mental Health delivery system.
- Utilize the MHD Ethics Committee and consultants to address ethical dilemmas with the people we serve.
- Ensure patients/clients with longer length of stays have a right to perform or refuse to perform tasks in the hospital or community without prejudice to their care.

RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHER EMPLOYEES OR COLLEAGUES

- Recognize and respect boundaries of people with whom we work.
- Accommodate the religious beliefs of employees to the extent possible.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

MHD is concerned with the overall mental health status of the community. It accepts a leadership role in enhancing public mental health and continuity of care by communicating and collaborating with other health care and social service agencies to improve availability and provision of mental health promotion, education, and patient care services.

ADMISSION, TRANSFER AND DISCHARGE PRACTICES

We believe that each person obtaining services has the right to participate in transfer, admission and discharge decisions and that these decisions must be based on sound clinical evaluations. We, therefore, have a responsibility to:

- Complete a clinically competent assessment for all persons seeking services.
- Treat individuals needing services regardless of ability to pay.
- Provide a coordinated admission process designed to meet the needs of persons seeking mental health services.

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- Assure that all transfers within the MHD are clinically indicated and aimed at assuring treatment in the least restrictive, most therapeutic setting.
- Provide for safe, well-coordinated transfer/discharge following assurance that the patient has been fully informed of the need for transfer/discharge and alternatives to transfer/discharge.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Educational activities for consumers, families, students and employees will focus on the treatment of illness and the advancement of knowledge and will promote health, well-being and recovery.

BILLING PRACTICES

The Milwaukee County Mental Health Division will bill the people we serve and their third party payors only for services actually provided. MHD will also provide assistance to the people we serve who have questions about the cost of their care.

PROTECTION OF THE INTEGRITY OF CLINICAL DECISIONS OF THE LICENSED INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER

- The integrity of clinical decision making will be protected regardless of how the organization compensates staff or shares financial risk.
- Clinical decisions will be based on patient health care needs following well-designed standards of care.
- Services will be provided to meet the identified needs of our patients and will constantly seek to avoid the provision of those services which are unnecessary or nonefficacious.
- Services will be provided to those patients for whom we can safely care within this organization. The Division will not turn patients away who are in need based on their ability to pay or based upon any other factor that is substantially unrelated to patient care.
- Business practices will be evaluated by the Medical Executive Committee to ensure that service delivery is based on patient need, not financial incentives.
- Ethical conflicts related to patient care decision can be referred to the MHD Ethics Committee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/BUSINESS PRACTICES

MHD Administration will maintain a fiscally viable organization and be good stewards of the taxpayers' money. All senior MHD managers who award or execute contracts have on file with the Milwaukee County Ethics Board a Code of Ethics statement completed annually which contains full disclosure of all personal business and investment interests or activities.

A conflict of interest exists when professionals are called upon to serve competing interests. Some apparent conflicts, such as transactions with a former employer or dealings with past business associates, may be acceptable as long as disclosure of the conflict is made to all involved parties. In order to avoid unacceptable conflicts of interest, the employee must:

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- Be honest and exercise good faith in transactions.
- Act always for the benefit of the employer or client and avoid any interest or activities, which appear to conflict with the interests of the employer or client.
- Avoid accepting gifts from consumers, their families and vendors except for nominal tokens of appreciation or unsolicited promotional items of nominal value for use at the work site.
- Address issues of conflict of interest with the treatment team when a MHD employee serves as a guardian or client advocate.

PRIVATE PRACTICE

The MHD reaffirms the right of its professional staff to engage in the private practice of their professional services. That right however is subject to the rules, conditions and definitions stated in Medical Staff Policy #3.1.9 "Private Practice."

PERSONAL INTEGRITY/ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS

As members of the Milwaukee County Mental Health Division, we agree to speak and act in ways consistent with the following ethical practices:

- communicating honestly.
- being compassionate and caring in all interactions.
- competently performing our job.
- maintaining competency through continuing education (following County, State and Federal laws as well as relevant, discipline-specific ethical codes of conduct.)
- respecting the rights of all persons seeking mental health services.
- maintaining patient confidentiality within the limits of the law.
- providing the same quality level of service for all.
- recognizing any behaviors, ours and others', that are inconsistent with competent, legal, ethical or moral practices and reporting those who engage in fraud, deception, abuse, or neglect.

Approved by: M. Kathleen Eilers
M. Kathleen Eilers, BHD Administrator

11/8/02
Date